

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Commission
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, October 13, 2021**

The Chairman, Matt Smith, called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M.

Roll Call

Members: Present –Vice Chairman Ralph White; Lois Shinko; Clint Gault; Chairman Matt Smith

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday, September 8, 2021

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Gault to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, September 8, 2021, and approve said minutes as published. The vote was all ayes and the Chairman declared the motion passed.

Landmarks Letter of Recognition – Ralph White

Mr. White stated they did not get together to write that; they spent time on the Cemetery instead.

Landmark Nominations – Lois Shinko

Ms. Shinko stated that she did not have any nominations.

Mr. White asked if anybody had heard anything about the house across the street from Two Bucks, next to the Tree House. The owner wanted a landmark plaque but he never got an application. Mr. Smith noted that at the last meeting, Ms. Shinko had asked if that particular house was on the landmarks list and Mr. Smith said that it was. Mr. White said that he was confused; this is the Craftsman-style house just to the west of the Tree House at Olde Avon Village? Mr. Smith said, yes, that house that you are talking about is on the landmarks list. Mr. White said, but the house does not have a plaque; the owner never came to claim it. Mr. Gault asked if he had requested it recently and Mr. White said that he wanted a plaque but he has to apply but he has not done that. Mr. Smith asked if the houses that were on the list originally all got plaques. Mr. White said that everybody was eligible for a plaque but they may not have come to get it or they were not home when the plaques were delivered because they did actually go door-to-door with them. If no one was home, he believed a second attempt was made and then after that if the owners wanted a plaque they could come to Old Town Hall during a meeting and many people did that.

Comments – Center Cemetery

Mr. White stated that last month we brought up that some of the headstones at the Mound Cemetery were falling down. We need to get that addressed and we contacted Tim Stallman of Eternity Monuments. Mr. Stallman met with him, Matt Smith and Mark Ladegaard from the Zoning Board there at the Cemetery and looked at some of the stones that need to be repaired or have fallen over. He recommended doing a few different things and his ballpark price did not sound outrageous. He and Mr. Ladegaard talked to the Mayor about it Saturday and the Mayor said to get something together and we will talk about it and see what we can do. So we are kind of at that stage but something has to be done about it. It does not all have to be done at once. He and Mr. Smith were thinking maybe we could come up with some sort of an endowment or fund raiser or donations to actually get the repairs made without

the time it takes for approval with City Hall and all the things that could stonewall it for who knows how long. We might just be able to kind of start and do a couple things every year if the City wants to pursue it with just even a little bit of money. We would be able to at least address some of the stones that are fallen over or threatened at this time. Not only are the stones deteriorating or falling over, but the City workers who cut the grass have to go around these fallen stones.

Mr. Gault stated that Mr. Ladegaard is a very knowledgeable guy and he asked what he had said regarding this. Mr. White said that he had some experience at St. Mary's restoring some stones and that was why Mr. White brought him along and asked his opinion because he is knowledgeable on a lot of things. And they had some volunteer work years ago at the Holy Trinity Cemetery on Jaycox Road. There were some stone repairs there and he wondered if anybody knows anybody that goes to that church where we might be able to find out who did what. Mr. Smith suggested going over to the church to talk to the priest or whoever is in the office as he was sure they would have records on that.

Mr. Gault asked if Mr. White had any idea of prices? Mr. White stated that one cemetery stone that they were looking at was a pretty hefty one. It had fallen over and it probably weighs 300 or 400 lbs. It would probably be about \$400 to \$500 to fix it and that is really not a lot of money. But the problem is, it is on the Mound and you have to get equipment up there and there are some obstacles. But there are other ways to do it, too, scaffold and other ways you can set up a pulley device. Mr. Gault asked how many total gravestones need attention and Mr. White responded that there are at least three that are already fallen over and there are others that are leaning and loose and there is a really big one that is definitely kind of tricky. Mr. Stallman said that would be a tough one because it is so big. Mr. Smith asked if Mr. Stallman had thought that one would be about \$5,000. Mr. White said he did not know but it is visible from Rt. 83 and is one of the biggest stones up there and the center of it is like a stone base and then the monument is sitting on the base of it. The base is kind of caving in and the stone is leaning and the top has already fallen off. It is put together like four sides with pegs. It is almost a safety hazard for the workers. Mr. Smith said, yes, it could be if someone was mowing around there.

Mr. Gault said that he would think the first step would be some sort of a financial assessment of what it would cost for the repairs. He would think that the Mayor would want that proposal first because he does like the concept of the repairs and he would support that. Mr. White agreed and said that the Mayor did mention that.

Mr. White added, and there are different ways to do it, too. Mr. Stallman looked at the stones and said there are two ways to do this. He said he could pick up the stones, throw some dirt, and fill it with some rock to level it. He felt that is not the way to do it because eventually the headstone is going to sink again and then it would have to be done again. He said the only way to really solve the problem is to remove the stone, dig it down, pour a cement footer and then replace the stone. Mr. Gault asked about the massive stones that are falling down and becoming hazards; what about the concept of saying we are just going to remove them for safety and replace them with a stone that costs \$200 and then there are no big issues going forward.

Mr. White said that is another thought but the cost for cemetery stones today is really expensive anyway so we would only save to put up something simple and cheap in place of something that was once really ornate or nice or devoted to that loved one. He did not like the idea. Mr. Gault said it is just that for a lot of cemeteries there is an endowment or a fund set aside to be used for repairs and maintenance. This was never done for the Mound Cemetery and so these stones might be replaced and then they only last for so long and then we have to do it again down the road. Also, part of the issue is the fact that the

Cemetery is on the Mound and can be unsafe for people and the City could have liability. Maybe that particular headstone that is leaning should not be so massive or tall. The replacement idea could start with the ancestors of these people but if they did not want to, then put up something that is safer for people who are taking care of the Cemetery. But either way, he would think that that person who does the quote, could give us a proposal of different options and that could be presented to the Mayor and then decisions could be made.

Mr. White stated that the stone that he was talking about that is leaning, is very large. There are local companies that drill holes in the concrete and lift the concrete and he asked Mr. Stallman about whether that could be done because the center base is what the problem is. Mr. Gault said, and remember, too, that there is a grave in there. Mr. White said that they talked about that. A lot of the sites do not have vaults. Mr. Stallman said there is probably nothing there and that is why it is a sinkhole because they were put in before laws where you have to have vaults, etc. These were pioneer days – 200 years ago. There have been some repairs made through the years and they were not very adequate. Mr. White is ok with these repairs because at least the stone is there and you can read most of it although some are so old, you cannot read them. But the bases are still there, they are just broken off and we talked about different ways to repair that. And again, there are many options so to have somebody come up with a quote would probably be the best way to do it. However, doing something is better than nothing. We do not have to everything right away. We could do a couple next year in July or August, when it is dry and everything is pretty solid.

Mr. Gault stated that anything done is great but we do need to think about the cost and what the options are. There is funding out there right now for different projects. It could be something where somebody would say they would support a certain option. For a fee, we could ask Mr. Stallman to do a detailed proposal with different options. Then we could go to the Mayor with that proposal and that way the City is only investing in finding out what the best route might be to do it, no different than what is done with other projects in the City. The first thing to do is to figure out the options, and that is what we need this assessment for.

Ms. Shinko asked that if some of the stones are really bad, could you just put in a plaque with the person's name. Mr. Gault stated that is what he is saying - there should be the different options and one of them should be the most minimal cost. Remove the ones that are hazardous and put in something that at least commemorates the person. Mr. White noted that there are very few of the large stones. He said that his family has had to buy a flat stone recently and it was not cheap; the old stone could be fixed for that amount.

Mr. Gault stated that his point is that it is about getting a full picture of what we are trying to assess, just to give the Mayor and Council an idea of different options they can take that would help in making a decision. He suggested talking to Mr. Stallman to see if, for a fee, he was willing to do a detailed quote outlining the different scenarios we were talking about. Mr. White said that would be a good idea to get something in writing; they would have to do that anyway. And then whatever we discuss could be allocated a little at a time. Down the road, we might be able to come up with volunteers or fund raising or an endowment. Mr. Gault added, and there are also a lot of nice business owners in town that might support that. Mr. White noted that it is not the Cemetery grounds; it is the stones and that is the specialty thing. The City maintains the Cemetery but taking care of the head stones is over and above what the City can do, so you want to get on a more professional approach to repairs. Again, something is better than nothing. He mentioned that there are some stones that just need to be cleaned and that is not anything that is really hard or expensive. There is some caulking to be done. They used lead in the old

days for sealing and a lot of lead has fallen out and water gets in there and freezes and is the problem. So we could go around and caulk and it would keep water out, but that is another process that could be done. It was agreed that Mr. White would contact Mr. Stallman to request a proposal.

Date of Next Meeting

Mr. Smith stated that the next meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Commission would be held on Wednesday, November 10, 2021, in the Council Chambers of Avon City Hall at 7:00 P.M.

Adjourn

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Ms. Shinko to adjourn the meeting and the vote was all ayes. The Chairman declared the motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

Transcribed by Gail Hayden, Assistant Clerk of Council